

# California Department of Veterans Affairs



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **BUDGET AGREEMENT A VICTORY FOR CALIFORNIA AND VETERANS**

**SACRAMENTO – July 27, 2004** – California Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Tom Johnson today praised the budget agreement that the Governor and legislative leaders reached as a key victory for all Californians and especially for veterans.

“Through the leadership of Governor Schwarzenegger, California continues our economic recovery by providing critical and well deserved services and benefits to California veterans while at the same time protecting all California taxpayers from tax increases and unfair budget cuts,” said Secretary Tom Johnson. “In this time of budget crisis in California we all understand our need to help make sacrifices. I, along with all California veterans, am grateful that Governor Schwarzenegger recognizes the sacrifices our veterans have already made and we appreciate the Governor’s leadership in preserving the grants, loans, Veterans Homes and other benefits which are so important to our veterans, their survivors and their dependents.”

The California Department of Veterans Affairs (CDVA) provides benefits and services to thousands of California’s 2.3 million veterans (the most in the nation). With only minor reductions in some programs during California’s budget crisis, Governor Schwarzenegger has protected veterans so they will continue to receive the help and assistance they have earned when they answered our country’s call to service. CDVA operates Veterans Homes in Yountville, Barstow and Chula Vista where 1500 veterans reside and enjoy a full range of physical and social activities, programs and health care services. The Department is in the process, over the next decade, of building additional Veterans Homes in West Los Angeles, Lancaster, Ventura, Fresno and Redding. California’s first State Veterans Cemetery is also being built in Redding and is scheduled to open on Veterans Day, November 11, 2005. The Cal Vet Farm and Home Loan Program is one of the largest of its kind in the nation, with assets of \$2.3 billion, allowing California veterans to obtain low interest mortgages, insurance coverages and other benefits. In 2003 CDVA staff also helped California veterans, in partnership with County Veteran Service Officers and veteran service organizations, obtain almost \$5.2 billion in federal benefits for pensions, disabilities, medical and other services. CDVA also provides similar programs for veterans, their survivors and dependents to assist them with education tuition, reduced state fees, state tax exemptions, federal benefits appeals and homelessness programs.